



## CLEANUP PROCEDURES FOR BROKEN FLUORESCENT BULBS AND LAMPS



Fluorescent bulbs and lamps, including compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing – an average of 5 milligrams – about the amount that would cover the tip of a ballpoint pen. By comparison, older thermometers contain about 500 milligrams of mercury. No mercury is released when the bulbs are intact or in use, so proper handling and disposal will eliminate any mercury risk from fluorescent bulbs. If properly cleaned up, broken bulbs should not pose a serious health risk. By following the directions below, you can safely clean up a broken CFL. It is not necessary to hire a professional for the cleanup.



### WHAT TO DO IF A BULB BREAKS:

#### For breakage on a hard surface:

1. Ventilate the room by closing all interior doors and vents, opening windows and any exterior doors in the room and leaving the room (restrict access) for at least 15 minutes.
2. Remove all materials you can and **DO NOT VACUUM**.
  - a. Wear disposable gloves, if available.
  - b. Carefully clean up the glass fragments and residue with a stiff paper or cardboard (such as playing cards or index cards).
  - c. Pick up any remaining small pieces of glass and residue using tweezers and sticky tape (such as masking or duct tape).
  - d. Wipe the area clean with a damp paper towel, cloth or disposable wet wipe.
3. Place all cleanup materials (cardboard, gloves, tape, etc.) in a sturdy glass container with a tight fitting metal lid such as a canning jar or peanut butter jar. Store the container outside of the house in an area inaccessible to children until you are able to dispose of it at a household hazardous waste location (see [Household Hazardous Waste Program](#)).
4. Wash your hands.
5. Leave windows in the affected room open as long as practical (weather permitting).

#### For breakage on carpet: Complete steps 1 through 5 above then:

6. If rug is removable, take it outside, shake, and air out as long as practical.
7. After the cleanup, the first time you vacuum the area where the CFL was broken, shut the door to the room or close off the area from as much of the rest of the house as possible and ventilate the room when vacuuming. Remove the vacuum bag when done cleaning the area, wipe vacuum with wet wipe and put the bag and/or vacuum debris, including cleaning materials, into a plastic bag and double bag and store the bag outside the house in an area inaccessible to children as in #3 above.
8. After vacuuming, keep windows open, door closed and children/pets out of room for 1-2 hours.
9. Consider removal of carpeting where the breakage occurred as a precaution if there are infants, small children and/or pregnant women who will be using the room.

*For more information, please contact the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services at 271-2956 or visit [CFL Fact Sheet](#).*